

Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) in Youth Justice: Understanding and addressing the impact

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Introduction

*“Speech, language and communication needs’, or ‘SLCN’ refer to those who have difficulties or conditions affecting aspects of their communication... **Speech** refers to spoken sounds...**Language** refers to comprehension and expression... **Communication** broadly refers to the unification of a range of skills to allow interaction with others. Individuals with SLCN have difficulty in one or more of the above domains. For some, these difficulties may be mild and limited to particular situations. For many, these difficulties are persistent, pervasive and complex” (CYCJ, 2017, pp.7-9).*

On October 31, 2017, CYCJ and the Improving Life Chances Implementation Group facilitated the SLCN in Youth Justice workshop. The event was attended by over 40 youth and criminal justice practitioners and managers, speech and language therapists, civil servants, education professionals, and academics from across 12 local authorities, 4 health boards, and 7 other organisations including Police Scotland, Community Justice Scotland, the Scottish Sentencing Council and third sector organisations. This mix of delegates was commented on in event evaluations (completed by 69% of participants) as a real strength of the event.

The purpose of the workshop was to support the achievement of the commitment under the current [Youth Justice Strategy 'Preventing Offending: Getting it right for children and young people'](#) to ‘improve awareness and support of speech, language and communication needs of children involved in offending’. The workshop aimed to:

1. Increase awareness of the prevalence of SLCNs in the youth justice population and the impact on young people’s experiences
2. Provide an opportunity for delegates to share their experiences, issues, challenges and good practice in working with young people with SLCNs
3. Share information on current policy activity in this area, tools and resources that can support practice
4. To help identify future needs and actions to support the aim of improving outcomes for young people with SLCNs in the youth justice system

To support this, the workshop included keynote inputs:

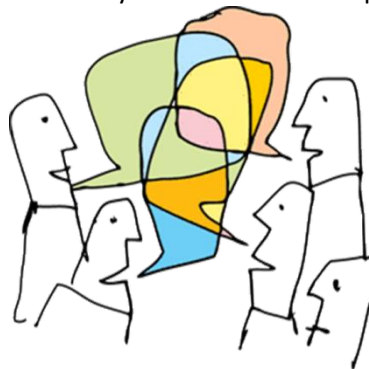
- The Nature and Prevalence of Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCNs) in youth justice populations, impact of SLCNs and tools and resources that can or could make a difference (Jan Green, Consultant Speech & Language Therapist, TalkLinks)
- "What are you talking about?": Being switched on to communication needs (Kenny McKay and Darren Woods, SOLD/People First Scotland) which highlighted the communication barriers experienced by members of the SOLD User Group and what could help to address such barriers
- Keep Safe, Have Fun, Stay Out of Trouble: Autism and Youth Justice (Corrie McLean and Graham Anderson, Autism Network Scotland) which focused on the challenges young people with autism can experience and the Keep Safe, Have Fun, Stay Out of Trouble app which is currently under development

- Addressing the Impact: Scottish Government Communication Action Plan and other policy opportunities (Kim Hartley Kean, Royal College of Speech & Language Therapists, Scotland Office)

The presentation slides and podcasts of these inputs are available [here](#).

These inputs were followed by group discussions to explore:

1. Participants' experiences and understanding of the impact of SLCNs on young people in the youth and criminal justice system; and
2. What more could be done to identify and address the impacts of SLCNs, summarised below



*Motivated and motivating,
Discursive,
Collaborative, Focused,
Productive,
Have an impact*

Section 1: SLCN: Understanding the impacts

The workshop included representatives from organisations working at almost all parts of a young person's potential journey through justice. While 86% of evaluation respondents reported having previous experience of working with and for young people affected by SLCNs, only a third stated their knowledge and understanding of the topic prior to the event was good, illustrating a real need for the event. With a number of Speech and Language Therapists in attendance, it may be surmised that many of those noting previous good levels of knowledge and understanding of SLCNs arose from these professionals.

Participants identified a wide range of issues and challenges experienced by young people with SLCNs throughout the young person's journey through justice, from the prevention of offending, to the young person being suspected of committing an offence, and the different disposal options that may be available. Many of these experiences and the risks of not responding to SLCNs or strengths were noted to cut across different parts of the system and have been differentiated for illustration purposes only, with the full range of responses detailed in Appendix 1.

In summary, it was unanimously agreed that **young people need to be able to express themselves effectively at all stages of the journey through justice, as well as to understand and retain complex**

information, including regarding the systems and processes within which they find themselves.

There was also a strong positive theme throughout that **with appropriate support at an early stage, children and young people could build their speech, language and communication skills, so improving their life chances.**

Collectively, it was reported that **without adequate support, young people may be more likely to enter the justice system and once there, cannot engage or participate fully in the justice process(es), understand the roles and responsibilities of individuals involved, how the system works and decisions that affect them, or the expectations placed on them. The result of this being that young people's rights, including under the UNCRC, fail to be upheld; young people may be unnecessarily criminalised; and may be up-tariffed through the justice system.** This has **significant implications for the young person, victims and society overall**, none of whom achieve justice when young people are not supported in respect of their SLCNs.

Section 2: SLCN: Addressing the impact

During the initial inputs and subsequent discussions, a range of good practice examples, tools, strategies and resources were highlighted that could support young people with SLCNs and the organisations, service leaders and practitioners working for and with them.

Policy

- [Speech and language and communication capacity - a national asset](#)
- [Ready to Act - A transformational plan for Children and young people, their parents, carers and families who require support from allied health professionals \(AHPs\)](#)

Guides

- [Autism training framework](#)
- [A Guide to Youth Justice in Scotland: policy, practice and legislation Section 9: Speech, Language and Communication Needs in Youth Justice](#)
- [CYCJ information sheet Communicating with Young People with Learning Disabilities](#)
- [SOLD Practice Guide for Support Workers – People With Learning Disabilities in the Scottish Criminal Justice System](#)

Evidence base

- [The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists Justice Evidence Base](#)
- International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders Winter Lecture [Professor Karen Bryan \(December 2014\) Language Impairment and Difficulties and Criminal Justice Processes powerpoint presentation](#)
- International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders Winter Lecture [Professor Karen Bryan \(December 2014\) Language Impairment and Difficulties and Criminal Justice Processes video](#)

Awareness raising information

- [RCSLT Core Briefing](#)
-

Communication Support tools – for responding to SLC Needs

Please note: No tools were listed for identifying SLCNs

- [ASD alert cards](#)
- Keep Safe, Have Fun, Stay Out of Trouble App (which is under development)
- [Communication passport](#)
- Emoji cards used in the Children’s Hearing System
- [Talking mats](#)
- [CYCJ Journey through Justice](#) (although the level of this may be too advanced for some young people)
- [Sentence trouble](#) (website which has a range of tools, materials and resources)
- [Mind of My Own App](#) which is used to gain young people’s views
- Accessible guides to services (e.g. [SCRA](#), [Kibble](#), [Good Shepherd](#), [St Phillips](#) etc.)
- [ClearCut Communication](#) (part of County Durham Youth Offending Service), which has resources including The ClearCut Screen Pack; ClearCut Youth Caution; The ClearCut Wordbuster; ClearCut Going to Court; ClearCut Thinking about Victims

Training and resource development

- [TalkLinks](#) (Service Specific)

However, while elements of **good practice were highlighted, it was felt that too often this was not the reality experienced by young people.**

Suggestions for improving responses to Speech, Language and Communication Needs

“Apply SLC lens to everything we are doing both at strategic and operational levels while considering opportunities, both currently and in the future” (Feedback from workshop participants)

The following suggestions were put forward as valuable potential areas for development to implement the above intent and support improvement. These suggestions have relevance for policy and decision makers as well as practitioners and managers working at all stages of the youth and criminal justice system. We have included all the suggestions made at the conference, to support reflection and consideration of what could be done individually and collectively to support young people with SLCNs to improve outcomes and help achieve justice. Work is now taking place to review and refine these suggestions in order to develop an action plan.

Suggestions for National Governance, Policy and Legislation

1. Encourage and drive recognition and awareness of the fact that working with young people with SLCNs is a core part of youth justice; the development of positive attitudes to young people with SLCNs; and an understanding that to be trauma informed, services need to be communication informed
2. Review availability and integration of quality SLCN support as a key component of the Whole System Approach and develop capacity where required throughout all stages of the justice journey
3. Develop and oversee the implementation of a systemic, comprehensive SLCN Support and Development plan for national and local Justice Services
4. Support the development of a mainstreamed “Communication Inclusion” culture and practice, which could be recognised by a Quality Inclusive Communication Standard. Inclusive communication would include the use of creative approaches and visual aids, such as pictures, comic strips, drama, art etc
5. Establish measures of performance and practice on SLCN provision and inclusion, across agencies including health, education, care, justice, and inspectorates
6. Engage with national policy opportunities to ensure they reflect the SLCN of young people at risk of offending or involved in the criminal justice system (See Appendix 1 for examples)
7. Consider the role of Intermediaries, building on the experiences elsewhere in the UK
8. Increase awareness of the potential for legal challenge where there has been a failure to uphold children’s rights in respect of making reasonable adjustments relating to the young person’s SLC capacity

Leadership and collaborative working

9. Multi-agency commitment to address barriers is necessary. At strategic and operational levels, strong, compassionate leadership could helpfully and positively own this agenda and in doing so, support the development of relationships and viable working, collaborative partnerships between agencies, service leaders and practitioners working in YJ services (at all stages in pathway) and SLC support services, available locally and nationally
10. Leaders and practitioners across and between agencies require to come together in real ways, making opportunities to build joint working strategies, shared plans, improvement projects and share funding; the co-operative development of interventions across universal and specialist services and person-centred decision making; the development and sharing of skills and knowledge and critically ensure that expertise is available as far upstream as possible to meet the needs of young people and those closest to them as and when required

11. Willingness across agencies to blur the boundaries between roles; consult with each other about how young people are impacted; respect each other's contribution; and ensure that those closest to young people are enabled to use practitioner expertise to maximum benefit and to jointly support young people
12. Leaders need to enable practitioners to prioritise relationships with young people and the time to get to know young people; adopt tailored, individualised approaches; and recognise traditional models of service provision are unlikely to be effective with this population
13. Ensure health and S< are part of multi-agency strategic decision making and operational groups and meetings
14. Agree and resource the building of SLC support capacity in youth justice through collaborative partnerships between relevant agencies

People skills

15. Develop and implement a SLC support competency framework
16. Develop and provide free access to learning resources to develop competences for all those working with young people in the youth justice system (See [Appendix 2](#) for an outline of competences and how such a CPD programme could work)

People capacity

17. Integrate inquiry about, and quality SLCN support, throughout all stages of the justice journey, as a key component of the Whole System Approach
18. Every Youth Justice Team/service should have a named S< to link in with protected time to develop relationships, staff competencies, embed SLCN profiling and identification and support the mainstreaming of inclusive communication best practice
19. Pilot integration of SLT in a Youth Justice Team (or equivalent) as a model and source of learning for teams/services across Scotland. This could include the [Interventions for Vulnerable Youth \(IVY\)](#) service
20. Support and funding to develop specialist S< roles and services to increase availability to support young people involved in offending
21. Providing easier access to S< for direction and advice around individual needs, which could include phone support, drop in services etc
22. Develop identifiable SLC champions within each justice agency, for example single points of contact within Police Scotland
23. Extend the availability of adapted and targeted interventions and services for young people, including those beyond the age of 16 without other diagnoses, leaving custody and secure facilities
24. Develop and ensure provision of additional support at transition points through systemic implementation of an inclusive communication culture and practice and use of a universally recognised communication profiling tool or "passport"

Resources

25. Develop communication inclusive YJ service information and practice support resources, involving young people in the development of resources
26. Develop and roll out standard SLCN screening and profiling tools that are quality assured, free and easy to access with accompanying guidance. Screening should be distinguished from SLCN assessment (which is a more in-depth process that should be undertaken by appropriately experienced S<)
27. Raise awareness of SLCN support services and how these can be accessed, including use of a consistent “request for assistance” pathway for young people and practitioners in justice services
28. Develop more accessible S< reports for practitioners and young people, for example, through the provision of summaries and ensure reports follow young people through the system
29. Centralise training and communication support resources into a free to use hub that is regularly updated in partnership with CYCJ, S<s and others. This could link with other toolkits that are available e.g. through professional bodies and should be streamlined and tiered
30. Support the development of virtual platforms and networks to enable ongoing opportunities to share good practice and build on momentum in this area

Research, evidence and Performance

31. Commission research into “what works” including the impact of current SLC provision at universal, targeted and specialist levels
32. Commission research where there are clear gaps in knowledge, for example regarding professional awareness of the impact of SLCN and capacity to identify and respond to this

Next steps

The event reinforced the centrality of speech, language and communication needs for children and young people and potential consequences for individuals, communities and justice where these are not met. There were encouraging messages around the possibility of addressing young people’s speech, language and communication needs successfully. The event provided an opportunity to recognise the valuable contribution that S< can provide and the scope for them to be able to multiply their beneficial contributions through advice and support to other professionals and workers. The recognition of the need to be ‘communication informed’ poses an intriguing challenge as to how we describe what this would mean for policy and practice. The richness of the discussions

and feedback showed that there is an appetite amongst the participants in the event, to be involved in finding ways to achieve this.

93% of evaluation respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they had gained greater understanding of the topic as a result of this event, and all bar one respondent stated that the knowledge gained from this event will have an impact on their practice. This event write up will be shared with all workshop participants and has been made available on the CYCJ and RCSLT website, along with presentations and voice recordings of inputs, for those who were unable to attend. This report has been shared with a range of organisations involved in supporting young people at different stages of the system including Police Scotland; social work; health; education; the legal profession; Scottish Prison Service; Children's Hearings Scotland/Scottish Children's Reporters Administration; Scottish Government; and the Youth Justice Improvement Board.

An action plan is currently being devised based on this report to take forward some of the recommendations which will be published in due course.

For further information, to offer additional feedback or if you would like to remain updated on actions taken following this event, please contact:

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Appendix 1: The young person's journey through justice

Potential stages in the journey	Issues and challenges experienced	Risks of not recognising and responding to SLCNs and/or strengths
Early life and schooling	Opportunities to identify SLCNs at an early stage in a child's life, well before they become involved in offending behaviour, may be missed.	The child may have difficulty in understanding the world around them, expressing thoughts and feelings, and reading and defusing situations. This could potentially lead to disengagement from learning, frustration and/or behavioural difficulties which may be a precursor to offending. This may impact on a child's life chances and applies across all potential stages in the journey.
Before offending/ Preventing offending	<p>Young people may lack understanding of what constitutes an offence, making preventing offending (as well as reoffending and repairing the harm caused) difficult;</p> <p>For young people, frustrations and limited behavioural repertoires stemming from SLCNs (and lack of recognition of such needs) may result in behaviours, such as anger that can bring them into conflict with the law. Evidence demonstrates the strong relationship between SLCNs and the presentation of "challenging" behaviour; While the impact of adverse childhood experiences, trauma and abuse on brain development is increasingly understood, the increased risk of SLCNs as a result is not always recognised, nor is the impact of SLCNs on health, wellbeing, life chances, or behaviour. It is often not recognised that many of the risk factors associated with offending are also associated with SLCNs;</p>	<p>Opportunities to prevent young people's entry to, or acceleration through, the youth and criminal justice system may be missed, with the significant and long-term implications and the adverse impact on young people's life chances this is recognised to bring;</p> <p>SLCNs may go unrecognised, unmet and unsupported, with significant resulting adverse implications for young people and more broadly;</p> <p>Avoidable offending behaviour arises, incurring associated costs, including financial, to the individual young person, any potential victims, services and ultimately society;</p>

	<p>There is still often focus on diagnosis, although SLCNs will not always be associated with any “diagnosable” condition, nor indeed will SLCNs always be “diagnosed”;</p> <p>Focus on literacy, education, and employability without recognising the underpinning connection with SLCNs. Progress in these areas cannot be achieved without first addressing core language skills;</p> <p>Inconsistent referral criteria, awareness of and access to SLC support services (i.e. particularly Speech and Language Therapy (S&LT), education psychology and CAMHS) which can result in a postcode lottery of access;</p> <p>Lack of S&LT service capacity and availability, particularly of those therapists with relevant experience and protected time to support young people involved in or at risk of offending;</p> <p>Delays in accessing services and subsequent reluctance of practitioners to make referrals in the future.</p>	<p>Communication exclusion from prevention and early intervention initiatives of a particularly high risk group;</p> <p>Risk assessments, interventions and resources may be incorrectly targeted or invalidated;</p> <p>Services focus on the presenting behaviour rather than the needs or difficulties underpinning this.</p>
Suspected committal of an offence	<p>Young people’s first contact with justice services is often via the police having been suspected of committing an offence. SLCNs may be recorded in Police concern forms but police do not consistently have adequate training in identifying and responding to/accommodating these needs. For example, in tailoring approaches in interactions with young people or understanding the impact of such needs on behaviours. There are further difficulties about whose role it is to act on the issues detailed in the concern form and which services Police officers could refer young people on to;</p> <p>Young people may experience difficulties in understanding what is happening, questions asked and language used, possible</p>	<p>Typical anxiety about police contact is often magnified for young people with SLCN. This can trigger flight or fight responses and/or preventable levels of fear and anxiety for the young person;</p> <p>Young people may not understand questions asked; may not be able to answer questions clearly or consistently; be highly suggestible; admit to things they have not done; feel pressured, provoked or are eager to please, which may result in charges being brought with significant and long-term consequences;</p> <p>Young people are judged based on their ability to communicate. Young people with SLCNs may be deemed</p>

	<p>consequences of answers and how the information shared during interactions with the police may be utilised;</p> <p>Young people may be unable to express clearly or coherently their version of events, and have difficulties with recalling or describing specific details such as times, dates, locations, people and timelines;</p> <p>Young people may require more time in order to process information and build relationships, which is not always available;</p> <p>Community officers may in some cases have a better knowledge of young people and be more understanding of their needs but availability of such individuals is perceived to have reduced;</p> <p>Appropriate adults role is not always clear or consistent; time pressures can constrain this role; SLCNs related skills, training and support varies; and confusion remains between this and the responsible adult role for under 16s;</p> <p>The prevalence of SLCNs are also higher in victims and therefore likely to have implications for witnesses.</p>	<p>rude, disrespectful or uncooperative if they do not communicate in the way that is expected of them. This can impact on the support which is provided and potentially police views on their motives, feelings and responsibility for an offence;</p> <p>SLCNs and strengths left unrecognised, unrecorded and unmet at this stage, represent a missed opportunity to gather reliable evidence;</p> <p>The cycle of frustration for young people can continue when methods to support communication are not put in place, which could result in further charges.</p>
Early and effective intervention (or equivalent)	<p>Awareness of SLCN impacts and capacity to identify and respond effectively to SLCN among those delivering early intervention supports and programmes is not known and may warrant further examination;</p> <p>Health professionals such as S&LTs, are not consistently involved in such processes and interventions;</p> <p>Referral to S&LT is not one of the commonly considered disposals (either as single agency or part of multi-agency support);</p>	<p>SLCNs and strengths left unrecognised, unrecorded and unmet at this stage, represent a missed opportunity for a route out of offending;</p> <p>No adaptation of early and effective intervention supports and programmes leading to:</p> <p>Communication exclusion and/or drop out from early and effective interventions, and thus often the opportunity to</p>

	<p>There is a lack of availability/capacity/funding of Specialist S&LT with relevant experience and protected time to support young people involved in offending.</p>	<p>gain support out with formal systems for young people with SLCNs may not be fully utilised;</p> <p>Avoidable anxiety for young people with SLCN;</p> <p>Young people with SLCNs may be deemed rude, disrespectful or uncooperative if they do not communicate in the way that is expected of them, which can impact on the support provided;</p> <p>Young people may be highly suggestible or are eager to please but may not understand what they are agreeing to or be able to effectively do what they are expected to, with resulting compliance issues.</p>
Children's Hearings System	<p>Awareness of SLCN impacts and capacity to identify and respond effectively to SLCN among Panel members and Reporters is not known and may warrant further research;</p> <p>Language used can be inaccessible and a young person's SLCNs are often not adequately taken into account in interactions;</p> <p>Support to understand and participate in processes can be insufficient;</p> <p>Current tools such as "having your say" may be less accessible to young people with SLCNs.</p>	<p>Understanding of system can be difficult for all children and even more so for children with SLCNs;</p> <p>Less effective participation of young people with SLCNs and clarity of information given or reported by them, potentially impacting Children's Hearing decision;</p> <p>For young people, anxiety and compliance issues as detailed above;</p> <p>The adverse impacts of young people being judged based on their ability to communicate, as detailed above;</p> <p>The decisions made by the Children's Reporter and panel members, and the implications of such decisions, may not be</p>

		<p>understood e.g. requirements regarding disclosure under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act;</p> <p>Poorer experience of the Children's Hearings System and potentially unequal outcomes for young people with SLCNs.</p>
Court	<p>Understanding of system can be difficult for all children and even more so for children with SLCNs;</p> <p>Young people may experience further difficulties in understanding the roles and responsibilities of different people involved in the court process;</p> <p>Children and young people may have difficulties in expressing their views or versions of events or understanding questioning in police interviews. These difficulties may also persist in court proceedings;</p> <p>Awareness of SLCN impacts and capacity to identify and respond effectively to SLCN among those involved in court proceedings is not known and could benefit from further examination;</p> <p>The impact of SLCNs can be exacerbated by the formal intimidating nature of the court environment;</p> <p>Lack of ability and confidence in instructing legal counsel. Legal counsel may also regard young people as likely to make poor witnesses, which may mean opportunities for equal participation are curtailed;</p>	<p>Less effective participation and engagement for young people with SLCNs and clarity of information/evidence given or reported by them potentially impacting Court's decision;</p> <p>Increased risk of violation of human rights to fair and equal justice;</p> <p>The adverse impacts of young people being judged based on their ability to communicate, as detailed above;</p> <p>Harsher, and potentially unjust disposals;</p> <p>Increased risk of breach of orders/disposals;</p> <p>Increased costs of proceedings.</p>

	<p>Language used and court process is inaccessible and often poorly understood;</p> <p>Use of specialist communication support and/or special measures to support vulnerable people in court is inconsistent and more likely to be available to those with severe and profound difficulties, despite those with more subtle and hidden difficulties also being greatly disadvantaged;</p> <p>Difficulties in understanding possible court disposals and the requirements these place on the young person, with significant consequences of non-compliance with the requirements of disposals, including programmes and interventions.</p>	
Young people in secure care/custody	<p>Young people with severe communication needs may become involved in violence because they are unable to negotiate their way through a challenging situation;</p> <p>Staff need training and tools to support young people with SLCN.</p>	<p>Young people less able to participate fully in planning processes for their time in custody and beyond;</p> <p>Young people may find it more difficult to access learning and other opportunities and support because of their needs.</p>
Transitions between services	<p>Difficulties in young people understanding the different expectations of systems (e.g. Children's Hearings System and adult court) and services (child and adult services);</p> <p>Gaps in the availability of S&LT provision for young people and young adults;</p> <p>Information about SLCNs and required supports, where it exists, may not be formally recorded and so may be lost in transition.</p>	<p>Young people can go through multiple systems, services and processes all with different demands, thresholds and language, which further compounds difficulties and lack of understanding;</p> <p>This can result in poor engagement with and/or dropping out of service that the young person is unfamiliar with;</p>

		Ultimately this will result in avoidable ineffectiveness or reduced impact of services.
Across services	<p>Young people may not know they have SLCNs so are unlikely to self-identify or may actively hide their difficulties, for example, through distracting “challenging” behaviour;</p> <p>This is often coupled with the failure of practitioners working with the young person to identify need for a range of reasons including lack of awareness, confidence, and perceptions that SLCNs are just “typical” traits of young people involved in offending; lack of training to recognise the complexities of communication and the range of experiences that can contribute to SLCNs; lack of consistent screening tools or agreement of who should be able to identify (as opposed to more extensively assess) needs;</p> <p>Once need is identified, uncertainty of what to do next;</p> <p>Needs may not be addressed in a holistic manner;</p> <p>Lack of family support and/or identification and response to intergenerational communication needs in families leading to difficulties in gaining and sustaining the engagement of young people and their families with services;</p> <p>Confidence of young people; peer pressure; stigma and the risk of further labelling young people may be additional factors in SLCNs not being assessed or addressed;</p> <p>Failure to understand the implications of SLCNs on the upholding of rights and inconsistent approach to making reasonable adjustments as per equalities legislation, as well as lack of consequences for the failure of organisations and agencies to do so;</p>	<p>Failure to identify and assess need;</p> <p>Young people’s needs go unsupported and unmet, at all levels and stages of the system;</p> <p>Language and communication skills are the building blocks of all youth justice relationships and interventions-without adequate attention to SLCNs the ability to improve life chances will be inherently limited;</p> <p>Cycle of frustration for young people; ongoing “challenging”/offending behaviour; and resulting very poor outcomes in respect to wellbeing and life chances, including of safety, health, activity, achieving, attainment, responsibility, respect, inclusion etc.</p> <p>Missed opportunity to break intergenerational cycle of communication disadvantage and offending behaviour;</p> <p>Exclusion from routes out of justice system for a high risk group;</p> <p>Repeat offending and associated individual, community and social costs.</p>

	<p>SLCNs is often seen as a niche area, rather than a core youth justice issue which effects the majority of young people involved in offending;</p> <p>Resources, even those targeted at high risk populations, are often produced without either prior training or expert advice, and so are often inaccessible to young people with SLCNs;</p> <p>A traditional model of single service silo approach to planning and intervention, which remains common, will not achieve the outcomes that young people need to interrupt the intergenerational cycle of poverty and deprivation. Young people with SLCNs require support at universal, targeted, enhanced and possibly specialist levels;</p> <p>SLT and other relevant services unavailable at present and/or resource cuts;</p> <p>System(s), services and interventions lack flexibility and individualisation of approach based on need.</p>	
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Appendix 2: Legislative/Policy Opportunities to effect positive impact

- Victims and Witnesses Unit-Appropriate Adults Working Group
- [Equity and Excellence for Scotland's Children and Young People](#)
- [Speech and language and communication capacity - a national asset](#)
- [Ready to Act - A transformational plan for Children and young people, their parents, carers and families who require support from allied health professionals \(AHPs\);](#)
- [Education \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#)
- Education Bill 2017
- [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) (SLC as underpinning the achievement of all wellbeing outcomes)
- [Evidence and Procedure Review](#) and [Next Steps](#) (including Pre-Recording Evidence of Child and Other Vulnerable Witnesses)
- Social Security Bill
- [Independent Care Review](#)
- [Health Literacy Action Plan](#)
- [Raising Attainment for All](#)
- [Pupil Equity Fund](#)
- Inclusive Communication Hub - inclusive communication tools (in development)
- Care Inspectorate Standards
- Frameworks and supports for children with disabilities and Additional Support Needs
- Focus on Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Work surrounding educational attainment and school inclusion

Appendix 3: SLC Competences

- Baseline of knowledge required of all practitioners within the justice system:
 - To be aware of the likelihood of the young person they are interacting with having SLCNs
 - Being able to identify when a child or young person may have an SLCN – i.e. skills and knowledge to identify “warning signs/red flags” and needs
 - Knowing how to record and respond effectively and consistently to those needs i.e. what this means for their role and interactions with young people
 - Understanding what resources are available
 - Understanding how to communicate consistently about the SLCNs of individual young people across the team around the child and to be able to explain this e.g. in reports
- Developing competences:
 - Requires training being made available to staff across professions
 - Training should be free of charge and included in pre and post qualifying training, across disciplines including education, health, social work, police, panel members, COPFS, the judiciary, SPS, advocacy services, Appropriate Adults etc.
 - Provided via tiered roadshows or training events developed in partnership and provided on a multi-agency basis